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Apply to the Cal Grant program...

Apply for a Cal Grant

It could
help put
you through
college


Assembly
California Legislature
JOE SIMITIAN

Chair, Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance
Assemblyman, 21st District

Dear Friend,

The search for college financial aid sources can sometimes be difficult. Many families and students find that college is expensive, but there are programs available to help you obtain the support you need. Before you decide which college or university to attend, get the facts about financial aid.

The Cal Grant Program guarantees financial assistance to every qualified graduating high school senior who applies. For high school students with a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) who demonstrate financial need, the state will pay the cost of fees at a Cal State or University of California school (or an ample share of the tuition at a private school). Students with a 2.0 GPA also qualify for financial assistance. Depending on the type of financial aid for which you qualify, books, room, and board might also be subsidized.

For more information about Cal Grants contact your high school counselor, college financial aid office, or local assemblyman. There are also websites listed in this guide that hopefully will be useful in applying for a grant.

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The Cal Grant Program

The Cal Grant Program has been expanded to guarantee financial aid to those students meeting eligibility requirements. Thanks to this change, college is now more affordable than ever for students who get good grades and have financial need. The best part is that applying for a Cal Grant is free and the Cal Grant does not have to be repaid.

Qualified students who meet the following criteria will be guaranteed grants.

Cal Grant A Entitlement Awards: Requirements include financial and basic eligibility, a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA), and graduation from high school this year or last year. This Entitlement Award provides for full system-wide fees at the California State University and the University of California, as well as tuition support at private California colleges and universities.

Cal Grant B Entitlement Awards: Requirements include financial and basic eligibility, a minimum 2.0 GPA, and graduation from high school this year or last year. This Entitlement Award provides up to \$1,551 for books and living expenses for the first year. Beginning with the second year of Cal Grant B benefits, Cal Grant B also helps pay for tuition and fees at public or private four-year colleges or other qualifying institutions.

California Community College Transfer Entitlement Awards: Students are eligible for this award when transferring from a community college to a four-year institution and they meet financial and basic eligibility requirements, have a minimum 2.4 GPA from a California Community College,

graduate from high school after June 30, 2000, and are under the age of 24 as of December 31st. This Entitlement Award is offered to California Community College students who were not awarded a Cal Grant within a year of graduating from high school, but meet certain requirements at the time of transfer from a California Community College to a qualifying institution offering baccalaureate degree programs.



Basic Cal Grant eligibility requirements

All Cal Grant applicants must:

- Be California residents
- Be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens
- Meet U.S. Selective Service requirements
- Attend a qualifying California postsecondary institution
- Be enrolled at least half-time
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined at the school of attendance
- Have family income and assets below the established ceilings
- Not be in default on any student loan

- Not owe any federal or state grant refund

Other Cal Grant

programs: Students who are not eligible for a Cal Grant Entitlement Award may be eligible for a Cal Grant competitive A or B Award that can help pay for college.



Cal Grant check list

1. Obtain a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from your high school or college financial aid office. You may also apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Applications must be postmarked between January 1 and March 2, 2004 or if March 2 is a Sunday, the deadline is March 3.
2. Make a photocopy of your complete FAFSA application and send the original to the federal address on the form (unless you have applied online).
3. Obtain a Student Aid Commission GPA Verification Form from your high school or college financial aid office. A high school or college counselor must certify your GPA on this form (or through a separate approved process).
4. Make a photocopy of your GPA Verification Form, and send it directly to the California Student Aid Commission. (Some schools will electronically submit the verified GPAs. Check with your school.)
5. The federal processor will send you a confirmation notice, called a Student Aid Report (SAR), within four weeks. Review this confirmation notice, and submit corrections quickly. If you filed your FAFSA online, you will receive your SAR online within 72 hours. If you do not receive a SAR, call (800) 433-3243.



The federal processor will forward your application to the California Student Aid Commission for consideration for a Cal Grant Award. If you have not heard from the Student Aid Commission by May 15, call (888) CA-Grant/(888) 224-7268.

HINT: Avoid waiting until the last minute to apply.

An early start will leave time to collect and correct information, ask questions, and solve problems.



For more information, check out these sites:

Free Application for Federal Student Aid
www.fafsa.ed.gov

California Student Aid Commission
(888) 224-7268
www.csac.ca.gov

The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid
www.finaid.org

EDFUND
www.edfund.org

The California College Explorer
www.californiacolleges.edu

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov.members/a21>